

# Blended Feeding Options: Sending Meals Home with Students



The Governor's [MI Safe Schools Roadmap](#) requires plans based on the community risk. Phases 4 and 5 may have a combination of students in the building and some students at home. The Michigan Department of Education provides the following guidance to help schools make plans.

## **Approved Waivers for School Year (SY) 2020-2021**

- Waiver #33: Allows [Non-congregate Feeding](#) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
- Waiver #34: No required [meal service times](#) for NSLP, SBP, and CACFP.
- Waiver #35: When using non-congregate feeding, a [parent or guardian may pick up meals](#) and take them home to children for NSLP, SBP, and CACFP. This includes pick up for meal participants in the Adult Day Care programs.
- Waiver #36: [Meal pattern flexibility](#) in NSLP, SBP, and CACFP. This waiver must be approved on a case-by-case basis. Start the process by filling out [this form](#).
- Waiver #37: [Offer Versus Serve](#) is not required in high schools for NSLP.

## **Mealtimes**

- In Phase 4 of the [MI Safe Schools Roadmap](#), classrooms or outdoor areas should be used for students to eat meals at school, if distancing guidelines cannot be met ([page 26](#)).
- If cafeterias must be used, mealtimes should be staggered to create seating arrangements with 6 feet of distance between students ([page 26](#)).
- If possible, in Phase 4 and 5, school-supplied meals should be delivered to classrooms with disposable utensils ([page 26 and 42](#)).
- If possible, classrooms should be used for eating in place, taking into consideration food allergies ([page 42](#)).
- Options for distributing meals to students learning off-site:
  - Parent or student pick-up
  - Bus delivery
  - Mobile sites for parent pick-up
  - Sending meals home with students before their virtual learning days
- Consider weekend or evening distribution of take-home meals for the following Monday through Friday. It may allow for easier production and staff scheduling.
- Options for serving students in the building – please see [Meal Service Options](#) document.

## Equipment

- Repurpose equipment already available.
- If possible, work with skilled trades classes to make or install protective equipment.
- Discuss with local health department if major changes are needed.

## Staffing

- Sending meals home with students and serving meals on site could require additional staffing.
- Adding hours to current employees may require adding benefits. Check with district Human Resources (HR).
- Many kitchens are not large enough to allow for social distancing. Use cafeteria tables for additional prep space in cafeteria or hallways. Check with local health departments to confirm.
- Conduct staff outreach to confirm staff that plan to return to work.
  - Develop a staffing plan to account for staff who are not returning or are at risk (i.e., those who are 65 years or have an underlying medical condition and decide not to return) ([pages 34 and 50](#)).
- Work with relevant local bargaining units to assess how job responsibilities may shift in light of the current pandemic and how new or additional responsibilities will be accounted for ([pages 34 and 50](#)).
- Work with custodial staff about cleaning around mealtimes in cafeteria or in the classroom.

## Food

- NSLP and SBP meal patterns must be followed.
- Streamline menu and production to accommodate take home and in school menu.
- Meal pattern flexibility requests must be submitted to and approved by MDE on a case-by-case basis. Request needs to be based on supply chain disruption or for food safety, handling, or logistical reasons. Start the process by filling out [this form](#).
- Develop a system to pre-order take home meals.
- If meals are sent home with students at the end of the school day, consider how much the student can carry and how to best package it.

## Food Safety

- Sending home shelf stable meals is recommended.
- Follow food safety procedures, as usual.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Follow personal hygiene procedures.

## Safety Precautions

- In Phase 4, face coverings are required for all staff ([page 22](#)).
  - Facial coverings may be homemade or disposable level-one grade surgical masks.
  - Any staff member who cannot medically tolerate a facial covering must not wear one.
  - Homemade facial coverings must be washed daily.
  - Disposable facial coverings must be disposed of at the end of each day.
- In Phase 5, face coverings are strongly recommended for all staff ([page 38](#)).
- In Phase 4, it is recommended that serving and cafeteria staff should use barrier protection including gloves, face shields, and surgical masks ([page 26](#)).
- Floor tape or other markers should be used at six foot intervals where line formation is anticipated ([page 23](#)).
- In Phases 4 and 5, it is recommended that flow of foot traffic should be directed in only one direction, if possible ([pages 24 and 39](#)).

## Keeping Students with Food Allergies Safe

- Communicate with students that have a Special Dietary Need Accommodation Statements if/when they want meals.
- Do not discriminate against students who have allergies.

## Counting and Claiming

- Meals served for planned school calendar must be claimed under NSLP and SBP.
- In-school and take-home meals will be reimbursed by paid, reduced-price, and free status. If the school is not participating in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), accurate counts by eligibility status need to be kept of students taking meals.
- Use paper rosters or a Point of Sale (POS) system to count students. Some POS systems have mobile applications available.
- Develop process to enter multiple take home meals into POS system to accurately reflect meals served.

- Meals are for students enrolled in school. Younger siblings are not eligible for take home meals.

## **Finances**

- Explore Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).
- Unless the school is CEP, students need to have money in their account to pay for their meals.
- Update lunch payment collection policy.
- Unpaid student meal debt may increase.
- Expect higher food and staffing costs.
- Cultivate donations that could support Universal Free meals.
- Maximize entitlement dollars used for USDA Foods.
- Maximize consortia membership.

### **Links used in the document:**

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/whitmer/MI\\_Safe\\_Schools\\_Roadmap\\_FINAL\\_695392\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/whitmer/MI_Safe_Schools_Roadmap_FINAL_695392_7.pdf)

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/Nationwide-Waiver-extension2-Non-congregate-Feeding-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/Nationwide-Waiver-extension2-Non-congregate-Feeding-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nationwide-waiver-extension2-meal-service-time-flexibility>

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/covid19/nationwide-waiver-extension-2-parents-guardians-pick-meals>

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nationwide-waiver-meal-pattern-flexibility-extension-4>

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JMS579W>

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nationwide-waiver-offer-versus-serve-flexibility-senior-high-schools>

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Meal\\_Serving\\_Options\\_695758\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Meal_Serving_Options_695758_7.pdf)